Painting of the Lord Mayor's Procession, 1888, which hangs in the Guildhall Art Gallery.

LONDON FILMS present

The SQUARE MILE

IN COLOUR
London... November — any November: wrapped in her historic cloak of mist. At her heart, perhaps the most famous Square Mile in the World—the ancient City of London. November is the City’s special month: for it is then that, each year, her Elected Head takes office and shows himself to his "people" in the Lord Mayor’s Show. It is the soft lights and shades of November which characterise the film’s photography. The Elected Head... anyone can become Lord Mayor of London. And in case some aspiring candidates don’t know how to set about it, the film shows them how.
Naturally, Dick Whittington is the Classic example of the rise of an apprentice to the rank of first citizen. Most people think of him as a figure of pantomime: few realise that he was in fact four times Lord Mayor, perhaps the wealthiest and most benevolent of all.
The Ceremony of Admission by which Sir Richard Whittington, the Gloucestershire lad, first entered office in 1398, was the same followed in 1953 in the case of a man from Worcestershire, the Coronation Lord Mayor, Sir Rupert de la Bère.
The film, as it follows the rise of the Industrious Apprentice immortalised by Hogarth, all the time blends yesterday with today: for it has been the same story throughout the centuries. The engravings and paintings depicting events and personalities of the past are blended with the moving pictures of today. We see that the young, ambitious citizen must soon turn from the pursuit of merely his own affairs and fortune: and give his time as Liverman, to watch over his Company’s benevolent
activities—be he Draper, Goldsmith, Vintner, or whichever of the time-old trades.

Next he must become involved in the affairs of the City Corporation as a whole: first as member of the Court of Common Council, next as Alderman, then Sheriff—until, at last, one dim November Day he may take possession of the Mansion House.

We learn the wide range of responsibilities of the City Corporation: from the guardianship of standard measures and inspection of standard weights, to the care of the City's thoroughfares and roads and bridges and open spaces: the supervision of the City's own police: their part in the administration of justice: in the trusteeship of St. Paul's Cathedral through the Lord Mayor: their watching brief in the House of Commons through the City Remembrancer: the replanning of the City after the war-time devastation. We see the Admission Ceremony in the Guildhall: the Court of Aldermen in session: the annual march-past of the boys at Christ's Hospital, of which school the Corporation have been governors since 1552: and the famous kitchens and Egyptian Room at the Mansion House.

For as spokesman for the most powerful single community in the world, the Lord Mayor must play host to the nation's leaders and to distinguished visitors of State: and his yearly reception of the Prime Minister at the Lord Mayor's banquet provides a unique and significant occasion.

Most important of all is the lead given by the Lord Mayor in times of national crisis: and the film includes scenes of the calamitous floods of 1953, moving as they are, and perhaps the only record to have been taken in colour. For it has been truly said: "The Isle of Dogs is not too small and Asia not too vast for the magnificent benevolence of the Mansion House," in the relief of distress through "the Lord Mayor's Fund."
LONDON FILMS present

THE SQUARE MILE

A short film in colour on the Lord Mayorality of London and City Corporation.

A WESSEX FILM PRODUCTION

Produced by
IAN DALRYMPLE

Directed by
DIANA PINE

Commentary spoken by
ALEC GUINNESS

Music by
JOHN GREENWOOD

Conducted by
MUIR MATHIESON

Associate Producer .......... DEREK YORK

Photography .............. W. CHASTON

Script .............. J. M. MATTHEWS

Unit Manager ............. R. L. M. DAVIDSON

Recorded by R.C.A. Photophone.

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